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ABSTRACT

The subject of peer harassment for women on college campuses is explored. In order to handle such situations effectively, administrators need to know the parameters of the problem, what they are dealing with, and ways to prevent bad situations. The topic is presented as follows: a definition of peer harassment; the prevalence of peer harassment; the impact of peer harassment; examples of peer harassment (group harassment, sexual harassment, academic harassment, joking, and pestering and street harassment); women colluding; harassment against special groups of women; cross-cultural differences; causes of peer harassment (the role of alcohol and drugs, and the role of pornography and violence in the media); legal considerations; and the role of institutions. Recommendations include educating the campus community, developing policies and programs, implementing procedures, and providing special help for women who are harassed. Special information is provided on how to empower women, an institutional self-evaluation checklist, and a word to students (do's and don'ts). Contains 45 end notes and 6 references. (SM)

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Peer Harassment
Hassles for Women on Campus

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"It . . . [is] not merely a matter of private significance when fraternity members throw bottles or beer cans, shout obscenities at passers-by or intimidate women students who are walking to a college function . . . [E]ven if only a minority of female students were offended, frightened, or shouted at when passing by fraternity row, they should not have to endure this sort of treatment as the price of attending . . . (name of college)." [1]

"The vast majority of college men, fraternity men among them, do not engage in these extreme forms of sexual abuse and coercion. But the community tolerance for those who do, and also for those who indulge in less violent but still degrading forms of sexist behavior, remains widespread. Students still openly defend the shouting of ugly sexist epithets on the grounds of freedom of speech, and openly argue that victims of sexual violence who have come forward were either asking for it or lying." [2]

What Is Peer Harassment?

Attending college is more than an intellectual experience; it has an important social component, especially for students who live on campus. The image of young men and women living in a collegial, intellectual atmosphere is an appealing one. At best, college can provide the opportunity to further the social growth of students, with men and women learning how to get along with peers and how to handle differences of race, ethnicity, and gender. This "social learning" has been labeled "co-curricular," indicating that it is equal in value to the intellectual learning that takes place on campus.

Values are an important part of education, and colleges communicate values in many different ways, not just through their curricula. The basic values of liberal education—especially respect for other individuals and the ability to treat others in a civil manner—unfortunately are not always expressed in the relationships between men and women on campus.

There is a darker side to campus life, often unnoticed. If acknowledged, it is too often brushed off as "normal" behavior. This darker side is peer harassment, particularly the harassment of female students by male students. For too many students, relationships between men and women are not always positive. Too many women experience hostility, anger, and sometimes even violence from male students. For example:

- A group of men regularly sit at a table facing a cafeteria line. As women go through the line, the men loudly discuss the women's sexual attributes and hold up signs with numbers from one to ten "rating" each woman. As a result, many women skip meals or avoid the cafeteria.
- A fraternity pledge approaches a young woman he has never met and bites her on the breast—a practice called "sharking."
- A group of men surround a woman and simultaneously expose themselves.

At one end of the scale, peer harassment consists of so-called "teasing," sexual innuendos, and bullying of a sexist nature, both physical and verbal. At the other end of the scale is explicit sexual harassment up to and including sexual aggression. [3]

A picture is emerging of too many young men on campus engaging in behaviors that can best be described as emotional and psychological harassment. Such behaviors, which are often in-

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vasive and disrespectful, can poison the college experience for women. Although some of these behaviors may at first glance appear to be individual, unrelated acts, they are instead part of a pattern representing widespread group behavior.

Because little has been written about this subject, we depended heavily in this report on our own extensive files and on anecdotal materials gathered from numerous campus reports and campus newspapers. Additionally, innumerable conversations with students, faculty members, and administrators at a large number of campuses confirm the existence of peer harassment on campus and provide additional examples. The incidents described in this report were selected not for their uniqueness but because they typify the many kinds of behaviors that occur. Many of the incidents described are ugly and disgusting. We have included them because they do happen on campus, and when they do, they affect women students. Indeed, they profoundly affect the atmosphere in which learning is supposed to occur.

These behaviors are not universal, nor do they happen all the time. Certainly not all college men bother or harass women students, and many women do not experience these incidents. While both sexes can be harassed, females make up the majority of peer harassment victims.[4] Although women are harassed by men primarily because they are women, the activities involved are not always of a sexual nature. Additionally, all women may not recognize such behaviors as harassment. When these experiences occur again and again, however, and when they are unnoticed, ignored, or condoned by peers and even by some college officials, men and women alike receive the message that women can be treated with disdain and lack of respect and it does not matter to anyone.

Harassment can happen at all types of schools—large and small, public and private, religiously affiliated, Ivy League, and community colleges. Although some institutions may have fewer instances of peer harassment than others, no institution is immune. Even one incident is too many for the person being victimized. It makes coeducation less than equal for both men and women.[5]

Although many administrators are responsive to complaints about peer harassment, some campus personnel are not aware that peer harassment is a problem. Others, while acknowledging that "distasteful" or "inappropriate" behavior has occurred, may nevertheless feel that it is a "personal" or "individual" problem to be handled by the woman or women involved. Nevertheless, campus administrators on the whole are increasingly concerned about harassment even though they may be unsure as to the best way to deal with it. To handle these situations effectively, administrators need to know the parameters of the problem, what they are dealing with, and ways to prevent bad situations—information that this report provides.

How Prevalent Is Peer Harassment?

Only a few colleges and universities have surveyed their students to determine the extent of the problem. In 1986, Cornell University surveyed women students and found that 78 percent of those responding had experienced sexist comments and 68 percent had received unwelcome attention from their male peers. Most of the incidents (89 percent) involved individual males; 11 percent involved groups of males.[6]

In another study, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 92 percent of the women and 57 percent of the men had experienced at least one form of unwanted sexual attention and had reacted negatively to it.[7] At the University of Rhode Island, 70 percent of the women surveyed reported having been sexually insulted by a man.[8]

Additionally, several institutional studies of campus fraternities have documented widespread harassment of women students by fraternity members.[9]

Peer harassment does not appear to be new. Since little data have been recorded in the past, it is impossible to know whether peer harassment is increasing. There may be more publicity and awareness now about peer harassment than in the past, when such behavior was often dismissed with "boys will be boys." While it is clear that not *all* male students harass their female peers, it is equally clear that *some* of them do.

What Is the Impact of Peer Harassment?

Many campuses are experiencing an increase in racial tension and bigotry. In some ways, the situation with women is comparable—some men are treating women badly, sometimes even abusively. It may not be an overstatement to characterize many of these behaviors as "sexual bigotry." Just as racial slurs, epithets, and other forms of harassment hurt minorities, sexual slurs, epithets, and other forms of harassment hurt women.

The effects of peer harassment are wide ranging:

■ *for women.* Peer harassment, like faculty harassment, sends the message that a woman is not equal to a man. She is an object of scorn or derision. She is not being taken seriously as a person; she is not valued. Even when a woman does not experience peer harassment herself but knows it is happening to others, she receives the same message—a message that can weaken a woman's self-esteem or self-confidence and can undermine her academic, vocational, and personal goals. Women may feel uncomfortable and annoyed; they may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or degraded; they may feel disgusted; they may feel helpless and unsure how to respond. At times they may feel angry, insulted, and fearful of violence. They may also feel guilty or blame themselves.

The cumulative effect of repeated harassment can be devastating. It reinforces self-doubt and can affect a woman's entire academic experience. Some women who experience the more severe forms of harassment may even find it difficult to trust or have friendships with men. When harassment comes primarily from classmates in a particular field, some women may change classes or majors, change schools, or drop out altogether.

Many women are unaware that others have had similar experiences and thus believe that their own experience is unique and personal. Women typically do not report harassment unless it is unusually severe, and even then they may not report it. Women often feel that nothing will be done or that no one will take their complaints seriously. In some instances, women—while not condoning the harassment—may accept it as "the way things are" and therefore not view it as something worthy of complaint.

Besides these psychological effects, peer harassment can cause physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, and pinched nerves in the neck—school can become, literally, a pain in the neck.

■ *for men.* When men harass women with impunity, the implication is that women are fair game and that such harassment is acceptable behavior. For some men, harassment becomes an approved way of bonding with other males at the expense of women. Pervasive harassment may make it difficult for a man to form a healthy relationship with a woman because it is hard to be committed to someone for whom he and others have little respect. When men view women as objects to be demeaned, men find it difficult to relate to women as equal human beings—much less as friends or potential romantic partners.

Men who do not respect women as individuals and do not take women seriously, moreover, are not well prepared for the working world, where women are increasingly likely to be their colleagues.

■ *for the institution.* Some schools have had adverse publicity about individual incidents of peer harassment. One university president had difficulty lobbying state legislators for funds because the legislators primarily wanted to talk about a recent, highly publicized fraternity incident on that institution's campus. Alumni may be less willing to contribute when peer harassment occurs and is not handled well.

The knowledge of harassment incidents, whether publicized or simply communicated by word of mouth, may lead to a decrease in applications from women, as seems to have happened in at least one prestigious university.

Increasingly, women consider the climate for women students as a factor in selecting a school. Student guides at Princeton University noted that high school students on campus often ask "what it's like to be a woman at Princeton." [10] Harassment also can affect student retention: If an institution or department is perceived as having a hostile atmosphere, women may decide to transfer.

Examples of Peer Harassment

Although some of the examples that follow may seem extreme, they are all actual incidents. Many sexual epithets, slurs, and graffiti are too obscene to print as examples. The behaviors themselves vary over a wide continuum and can occur wherever young men and women are together. A large number of harassment incidents occur in coed dormitories, in classrooms, at parties, at campus events, and outdoors on campus grounds. [11] They happen to women across all majors but may be worse for women in traditionally male fields.

The various kinds of peer harassment do not fall into distinct categories; many overlap. The fact that some of these behaviors have been given nicknames (for example, "sharking") suggests that they are common occurrences at different schools across the country.

Group Harassment

Some of the most serious forms of peer harassment involve groups of men. Men often do things in groups that they would not do alone. [12] In some instances, they may be carried away with a situation and not think about what they are doing. At an early age many boys learn and practice their masculine identity by using girls as a "negative reference group"; that is, boys denigrate girls and their activities in order to feel like "real boys." [13] As adults, they also may be afraid of appearing concerned about women's feelings and not being "macho." They may want to be accepted by other men. Perhaps most importantly, they may be fearful of losing the group's approval—they do not want the group to turn on them if they refuse to go along with it.

Whatever the reasons, when men are in a group they may say or do hostile things to women that they might not otherwise do as individuals. When men outnumber women, such as at fraternity houses, stadiums, and some parties—and especially if alcohol is involved—incidents of harassment are more likely to occur. Group harassment incidents include:

■ "scoping," which usually involves describing and rating women's attractiveness on a scale of one to ten. Most commonly, women passing by groups of men may find their sexual attributes loudly discussed and rated by the men.

■ yelling, whistling, and shouting obscenities at women who walk by fraternity houses or other places where men gather. Many men believe that women view such activities as flattering;

■ running women off sidewalks. At one small college, men walk two to three abreast on narrow sidewalks. They separate and allow men to walk by them but expect women to get out of the way; if the women do not, the men walk into them.

■ "elephant walk," wherein men expose their penises and simultaneously pull out their pants pockets to represent the elephant's trunk and ears.

■ "mooning," whereby men pull down their pants and show their buttocks aggressively. This is often done by a group of men to one or more women.

■ intimidating a woman by surrounding her, demanding that she bare her breasts, and not allowing her to leave until she complies.

■ creating a disturbance outside of residence halls. At one university during examination week several hundred men gather at night outside a dormitory, chanting incessantly, "We want tits! We want tits!" They refuse to leave (and let the women continue studying) until one of the women finally bares her breasts.

■ vandalizing sororities. A student at a large eastern university described her experience: "Do you have any idea how frightening it is to wake up to the sound of breaking glass? Or how frightening it is to have somebody beating on your doors and windows for hours? We've even had doors kicked in... We've had to spend a couple of thousand dollars because of this kind of incident." [14]

■ harassing women who support women's rights. In one incident a group of men yelled obscenities and threw beer at women rallying against date rape on campus.

■ tying up a woman and molesting her. [15]

Men in Fraternities

The fraternity selects a brother to perform a ritual—the "flying blue max"—at a fraternity-sorority activity. The brothers grab a woman and position her so that the preselected male can bite her on the buttocks.

Fraternities are frequently involved in much of the peer harassment that occurs on campuses. Many of the examples described earlier also involve fraternities. Some of the following examples take place when men are being hazed as part of their initiation into a fraternity or women are being hazed as part of their initiation into a sorority. Many fraternity rituals have undercurrents of violence toward members and toward women and often have highly sexualized components in which women are portrayed primarily in a sexual capacity. On some campuses, "little sister" rushes are viewed as providing "new meat" for fraternity members.

Fraternity harassment can be mild—taking new sorority pledges to the fraternity house to be weighed, insulting new sorority pledges or calling pledges names usually related to their physical attributes. One fraternity ritual involves singing obscene songs to a sorority and then mooning the women. At other times, fraternity actions are not so mild— at one school, fraternity brothers bit new sorority pledges on their buttocks so severely that several needed medical attention.

Fraternities often sponsor events that result in the harassment and degradation of women or define women primarily as sexual objects. Fraternity parties often advertise sexual themes, as in, "Come for a lei on Hawaiian night." On one campus, a fraternity "scavenger hunt" list included "Xerox copies of female genitalia" and "women's underwear and related objects," each of which was assigned a point value. At one party, the face of a female mannequin was smashed and red paint was smeared on the face and breasts to resemble blood. The mannequin was hung from the balcony as a decoration. Even more seriously, 80 to 90 percent of reported campus gang rapes occur at fraternity parties. [16]

Men at Stadiums

Three men were on their way to a football game. Two of the men were urging the third to drink more beer. Here is their conversation as reported by an administrator's spouse:

"C'mon. You gotta drink more."
"No more, no more."
"Yeah, man, you gotta puke at the game."
"Yeah, man, you gotta puke on some bitch."

Harassment often occurs in stadiums and fieldhouses before, during, or after football or basketball games. Some of these activities, however, can also occur elsewhere. Stadium harassment includes such activities as "body passing" in which a woman—sometimes willingly, but often unwillingly—is passed from bleacher to bleacher; the men may undress her, and even rip off her clothes; she may be repeatedly fondled, and/or bitten along the way. It also includes pulling down women's shorts, slacks, or skirts; "sharking" (biting); asking a woman, "Can I write my name on your shorts?" and then biting her on the buttocks; throwing or spilling beer on women; or vomiting on women.

Sexual Harassment

"An upperclass [student] from my living group kept trying to make sexual advances—trying to take my clothes off. I told him that his advances were not desired. It angered me that he did not respect my answer—I felt worthless, helpless."

In general, sexual harassment involves *unwanted* sexual attention. Some men deliberately intend to harm or annoy women. Others may think that women are flattered by *any* kind of sexual attention. They presume that women like sexual attention, especially if the women do not indicate displeasure. They may even feel that women want or expect this type of behavior. Thus, some men feel they are excused from responsibility; if a woman does not like it, it is her fault because she does not protest.

All sexual attention is *not* sexual harassment. Certainly whenever men and women are together, sexual attraction is possible and people will express their attraction. Unwanted sexual attention is experienced by women as harassment when personal boundaries are crossed. What may be appropriate in a continuing relationship is inappropriate coming from a stranger or new acquaintance.

Unwanted sexual attention may take many forms:

- Interpersonal harassment:
  - inappropriate personal remarks such as comments about a woman's body or sexual activities. Women are uncomfortable when men, especially strangers or men they do not know well, make comments about their sexuality: "I was helping out a [dorm] party by serving drinks behind a counter. A male student I had never seen before came up to me and said that I have nice breasts. I told him to go away but he continued. Finally he left. I felt offended, humiliated, and insulted." Inappropriate personal comments are not perceived as compliments but make women feel uncomfortable because they have been depersonalized—reduced to being merely a sexual object without individuality or humanity.
  - unwanted touching or kissing. [17] Women students have been hugged and kissed and have had their breasts grabbed or fondled, especially at parties.
  - persistent sexual attention, especially when it continues after a clear indication of nonreciprocity of feelings. A man, for example, may repeatedly ask a woman for a date though she has already declined.
  - requests for sexual activity. At one campus, men shout sexual invitations through women's open windows on the ground floor of a dormitory. Male students on another campus forced a female student against a building and attempted to pressure her to date a friend. When she did not agree, they made sexually offensive remarks to her and loudly ridiculed her after she broke free.
  - sexual bantering and sexual jokes, including leaving obscene messages on computers for women to discover when they use the computers in class and depositing sexual paraphernalia in women's mailboxes or in front of their doors.
  - giving women pornographic materials—leaving them on a woman's desk, sending them by mail, or slipping them under the door to a woman's room.
- Sexually demeaning climate or atmosphere:
  - sexist posters and pictures in places where women will see them. [18] These convey the message that women are primarily viewed by men as sexual objects rather than individual beings.
  - sexist graffiti and bumper stickers. One popular bumper sticker says "No fat chicks." At one school a poster—also saying "no fat chicks"—was put on the front door of a fraternity house prior to a party. Obscene graffiti, along with racist and anti-Semitic remarks, often appear in library carrels and other public places.

Often these graffiti remain in place for years, offending several generations of students.

- sexist advertisements for campus events. At one prestigious school, campus posters advertising a picnic said, "Look, son, if you're agonizin', I know a couple of girls . . ."
- pseudo-surveys about sexual activities. These have been distributed in dormitories, fraternities, and sometimes published in campus newspapers. The more frequent the sexual activity, the higher the score. Extra points are given for having raped a woman. People with low scores are labeled prudes.
- social activities focusing on women's sexuality. Some student-sponsored events demean women by portraying them primarily as sexual beings: wet T-shirt contests and X-rated and pornographic movies used as fund-raisers, for example. These events also convey the message that women are not valued as individuals.
- "petty" hostility toward women. This can take many forms such as throwing things at women, pouring drinks over women's heads or on their breasts, heckling women as they enter a room or lounge, and making obscene and other sexually tinged remarks.

Academic Harassment

In one class, when a female student raised an issue concerning women, several male students groaned and booed. The woman did not participate again in that class.

Women's classroom participation is often denigrated. Male students may interrupt women frequently, often with personal or irrelevant—not substantive—remarks. [19] Men may dominate a class and discourage women from participating. They may ridicule women when they do speak, thus discouraging or intimidating them from participating. Women may find themselves treated like "dates" rather than colleagues: One woman, much to her surprise, heard herself described as the "territory" of her male fieldwork partner. Women's ambitions or interests in traditionally male areas (such as science) may be belittled or disparaged: "You came here only to get married."

Sometimes harassment is less overt: Men may simply frown or groan when some women speak in class, especially if the women are very bright and assertive. Sometimes male students hiss when some women speak in class. Despite academe's traditional view that the classroom is an open place to discuss all ideas, some women are fearful of raising women's issues in class because of the hostility they may face from male students (and sometimes from faculty members as well). Faculty members do not always intervene, thus inadvertently conveying the message that the behavior of the men is acceptable. [20]

"Joking"

"Men put women on pedestals so they can look up their dresses."

So goes a joke heard on one campus. Joking is a time-honored way to mask hostility—cruelty by caricature. Almost all of the jokes told about women are jokes which, at best, cast women in a poor light or, at worst, degrade them. Women feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, and angry, yet when they protest this kind of humor, they are likely to be asked, "What's wrong, can't you take a joke?" Thus, the person being harassed, rather than the harasser, is made to feel at fault. Women are left with very little recourse; no one wants to be accused of lacking a sense of humor. The problem is that peer harassment is no joke.

"JAP" jokes (see p. . .) describing the stereotyped "Jewish American Princess" are frequently told on some campuses. An example: "What does a JAP make for dinner? Reservations." Many people, including, sometimes, Jewish women themselves, feel free to tell "JAP" jokes. The fact that the victims tell the jokes may indicate unconscious self-contempt based on accepting the stereotypes implied in the jokes. Women may also tell these jokes as a way of saying, "I'm not like that; I'm different."

Jokes about rape are not uncommon. The threat of rape is sometimes used as a way to intimidate women:

- At one university a rape occurred in dorm room 436. Subsequently, some fraternity members would call out to women walking by, "Let's do a 436 on her."
- In many classes, when rape is mentioned some male students laugh.

Pestering and Street Harassment

Many women students (as well as women faculty members) avoid a particular supermarket even though it is the closest to campus. There is a fraternity house on either side and one across the street. As women enter and leave the market, the fraternity brothers make obscene remarks and generally harass the women.

Pestering covers a variety of behaviors such as teasing and taunting, sending women insulting letters (at one school a number of women were sent anonymous letters telling each that she had been voted one of the ten ugliest women on campus); or ridiculing activities in which women are involved (this is particularly prevalent in sports). On one campus, a male student walked into a number of rooms in a women's residence hall late at night, shouted obscenities at the women, and ran out.

Street harassment involves individual men (or men in groups) who whistle, make sexual comments or slurs, issue sexual invitations, or yell obscenities at one or more women passersby. Many men believe that women are pleased by such behavior, although most women report annoyance and irritation.

Men often harass those participating in "Take Back the Night" marches—both women and the men marching with them. During one "Take Back the Night" march, a young man mooned the marchers. University officials contemplated expulsion until it was pointed out that at the same university, men who had raped women were not expelled. At a "Take Back the Night" march at another university (after a fraternity gang-rape incident), when the women marched along the campus fraternity row, the men taunted the marchers with chants of "Gang rape, gang rape," "Let's rape her," and "I'll take that one." [21]

Women Colluding

Why do some women participate in wet T-shirt contests or allow beer to be poured on their breasts? Why do they sometimes participate in their own victimization and thus help support an inhospitable atmosphere on campus? There are no easy answers to these questions. Not all women feel uncomfortable or annoyed

when these activities occur. Indeed, some women cannot understand why others do not like such behavior.

Some young women may mistake some forms of harassment for flattery. For example, when men yell obscenities at them or tell them sexist jokes, women may feel more desirable and complimented because they become the center of attention. Some women may disagree with or rebel against feminist ideals. They want to go back to a more "romantic" time when men "took care of" women and women could enjoy being sex objects. Others want to be considered "good sports" and able to "take a joke." Some women, like some men, believe that this is the way of men, that the behavior is *normal*—that this is the way to have a "good time" and be accepted by the group.

Some women, especially those involved in sororities, may feel that they will be ostracized if they do not go along with demeaning fraternity/sorority activities. They want to be liked by men and other women and are afraid to antagonize them by disagreeing or withdrawing from the activity. Furthermore, some are afraid to report these activities because they fear retaliation. Indeed, these fears are often justified; some women who have complained about harassing activities have had obscenities shouted at them and have been otherwise harassed.

Harassment often escalates when it is tolerated, encouraged, or ignored. Sometimes women who go along with a little harassment may find that the harassment increases. Initially they like the behavior, but then it escalates to a point where they become uncomfortable.

Some women do not collude in the sense of actively going along with harassment but instead do nothing about it. They may feel helpless or not know how to say that they do not like the behavior. They do not report incidents of harassment because they feel that even if they do report such incidents, no action will be taken against the harasser(s)— especially because it often will be her word against his. Women may also worry about loss of privacy.

Women who inadvertently or knowingly participate in their own victimization or that of others help perpetuate a climate conducive to peer harassment.

Harassment Against Special Groups of Women

Although many women are targets of peer harassment, some groups of women tend to be singled out more often than others.

On some campuses, minority women are victims of harassment because of their sex and their color. When minority women are harassed, sexual and racial anger may be so fused that it is difficult to tell whether the harassment is sexual or racial. Often it is both.

- Black women have been openly taunted with the cry of "Black meat."
- Hispanic women are also often sexually teased and taunted.
- Among some fraternity men, a man is not considered a man until he has slept with a Black or Hispanic woman.
- A white fraternity had two Black women strippers at one of its parties, thus offending many Blacks on campus.
- A white male shouted sexual and racial remarks at a Black woman student who was walking by a men's residence hall.

Because of fantasies, myths, and stereotypes that may portray minority women as "exotic/erotic" or sexually active, these women may be more likely than others to be subjected to harassment focusing on their sexuality.

Asian-American women have been teased when their grades are not perfect. On some campuses, men have said to Asian-American women, "Come play *Platoon* with me." (This is a reference to the movie *Platoon* in which Asian women were raped.)

A growing number of Jewish women are being harassed on campus. [22] They have been stereotyped as wealthy and spoiled and given the label "JAP"—Jewish American Princess. While "JAP" jokes are not a recent phenomenon, these jokes recently have become uglier. ("What do you call forty-nine JAPs floating face down in the river? A beginning.") "JAP" slogans and obscene graffiti coupled with swastikas have appeared on some campuses. [23] Fraternities have sold T-shirts that read "Slap a JAP." At one university, whenever a lull occurs during football games and a stylishly dressed woman is sighted, members of the band point to her and loudly chant, "JAP! JAP! JAP!" Women at this institution say that they fear standing up during a game, for the chant can be directed at any woman who is noticed. [24] "JAPs Do Not Enter" signs with swastikas were hung on dormitory doors at one school. Cartoons about "JAP"s appeared in a campus newspaper. [25]

There have also been reports of older women and disabled women being harassed by their peers. At one school, a group of men surrounded a woman in a wheelchair and taunted her before they allowed her to pass.

As mentioned earlier, women in traditionally male fields seem especially likely to be harassed.

Heavy or unattractive women are frequent targets of harassment. Comments about their appearance may be especially hurtful if they correspond to an already poor self-image.

Many lesbians have been the victims of verbal harassment, intimidation, and even physical assault.

Women who raise women's concerns, indicate support for women's issues, or take an active part in pressing for change (such as working in a women's center) are often deliberately targeted for harassment. Some men try to intimidate or express their anger to these women by calling them lesbians. Women have received anonymous threatening letters and phone calls and are often the target of mean or obscene remarks. One woman who worked at a campus women's center was surrounded by a group of men in the bathroom of her coeducational dorm. The men denigrated her work, exposed themselves, and threatened to rape her. The incident ended when other people entered the bathroom and she broke away. When she asked to transfer to another dormitory because of the incident, her request was denied.

Cross-cultural Differences

American colleges and universities—especially the larger research universities—often have students and teachers from around the world. Twelve percent of those enrolled in graduate school are from other countries. [26] This can mean a rich, diverse cultural experience for everyone, but it can also mean problems. Many of the foreign male students come from cultures that do not con-

sider women equal to men. Indeed, to some international students (and faculty members), women who are alone may be viewed as "loose" women. Since college women are alone, some of these men view them as open to sexual activity and have grabbed, kissed, and fondled women against their will. [27] Some have been sexually harassed and assaulted. Teaching assistants have refused to call on women or have made hostile remarks toward women in class.

What Causes Peer Harassment?

There is no single explanation for the phenomenon of peer harassment; it is a complicated interaction that varies with individuals and situations. What follows is a brief discussion of rather complicated phenomena. It is not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject.

Peer harassment often begins long before students arrive at college. It occurs in high school and even in elementary school. Many men who harass women view them as a class of people, not as individuals. Their actions are often based on stereotyped views. They do not see the people behind the stereotypes.

Men are generally socialized to be dominant. They may be uncomfortable dealing with strong women and their discomfort may translate into anger. For some men, lashing out at these and other women by harassing them is a way to alleviate their discomfort. For some, harassment is anger against feminism—a way to strike back at women.

Clearly, anger against women (whether conscious or not) is one of the underlying motives for much harassment—especially in situations where women are physically injured. Anger can come from many sources: from a personal affront, as in the case of a man who has been treated badly by his girlfriend and who wants to take it out on all women; to a general resentment, for example, about having to compete with women for jobs or admission into graduate school. Anger also can come from sexual frustration: A man may be attracted to a woman, be frustrated when she does not reciprocate his feelings, and thus lash out at her and/or other women. In many ways, women may become scapegoats for men's problems.

Peer harassment may also involve issues of power and control. By hurting someone or making other people feel weak, some men feel stronger. This is reminiscent of the "bully" syndrome in which the smaller, weaker person is attacked by the stronger one. In other forms of sexual harassment, too, when a faculty member harasses a student or a supervisor harasses an employee, power and control are major factors. The person doing the harassing uses his (or her) power to intimidate sexually the other person.

Many men feel they are more powerful than women. Because their sense of well-being depends on being stronger, smarter, and more assertive than women, men may belittle and otherwise devalue women as a way of confirming their superiority. [28]

As mentioned earlier, a desire to be "one of the boys" and be accepted can explain some men's behavior, especially in groups. Participating in harassing activities becomes a way to bond with other men, a way to prove oneself. The social immaturity of students also has been used to explain—and then excuse—harassing behaviors.

The Role of Alcohol and Drugs

"I was approached by a very drunk guy at a party who made obscene suggestions. It made me feel disgusted and angry."

Alcohol and drugs are common to some incidents of peer harassment. By reducing people's inhibitions and creating an atmosphere where even hurtful or violent behavior is considered amusing, alcohol can make otherwise unacceptable behavior seem acceptable. This is especially true when men are in groups. A single man drinking too much can be hurtful; a group of men who have been drinking can be even more so. A crowd mentality combines with the lack of inhibition caused by alcohol to create a potentially explosive situation. Unfortunately, many fraternities encourage heavy drinking among their members; at some fraternity parties, the only drinks available are alcoholic beverages. Sexual abuse, including gang rape, is often linked to alcohol.

Cocaine can also be a factor in peer harassment. Unlike marijuana, which tends to make people lethargic and passive, cocaine is often energizing and typically creates a feeling of power, of being superior and in control, thus setting the stage for harassment incidents.

The Role of Pornography and Violence in the Media

Pornography is readily available to college students. Magazines such as *Hustler* are sold on many college campuses. Pornographic movies are sometimes used as a fund-raising device by student groups, most notably fraternities. Pornography generally degrades women and often depicts situations in which women are weak and treated badly; they are portrayed as enjoying rape, pain, and humiliation. Often violence is an integral part of what is portrayed. Many sociologists believe that those exposed to a great deal of pornographic material are influenced by its messages about women. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore a direct link between pornography and harassment of women, it is possible that such a link exists.

Violent movies, music videos, and publications that are not pornographic but depict women as being brutalized can be as harmful as pornography. They, too, promote a perception of women as outsiders, as objects that exist for men to exploit, manipulate, and harm.

Legal Considerations

In many instances, peer harassment is more than a personal issue; it also may be illegal. What follows is a brief discussion of how campus peer harassment may be treated under law. [29]

■ *Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.* This law prohibits discrimination, including sexual harassment in employment. In *Meritor Savings Bank, FSB v. Vinson,* [30] the U.S. Supreme Court defined prohibited sexual harassment to include an offensive environment for employees (irrespective of any threat of loss of economic benefit). The Title VII guidelines describe one of the criteria to determine which behaviors are illegal: "The conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offen-

sive work environment." [31] In several cases, courts have ruled that managers and supervisors in some instances may be held responsible for harassment by co-workers. Thus, institutions may be liable in many instances for peer harassment occurring when student employees work with each other.

■ *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.* This law prohibits sex discrimination in institutions receiving federal funds. All programs and activities are covered. [32] Title IX requires that an institution provide an environment free of discrimination. It clearly prohibits sexual harassment of students by faculty and staff. It can also prohibit harassment of students by students as well.

In general, the interpretation of what constitutes sexual harassment under Title IX has followed the concepts developed under employment discrimination law (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964). Although no case involving Title IX and sexual harassment has reached the Supreme Court, it is likely that the Court would follow its own lead from the *Meritor* case and others. Just as courts have held under Title IX that co-workers and peers can cause an employer to be liable for sexual harassment through the creation of an offensive environment, so, too, it is expected that schools would be held liable under Title IX for sexual harassment of students by students, including the creation of an offensive environment that interferes with a student's learning and well-being.

Standards of employer and institutional liability are still evolving in the area of harassment. To the extent that acts of harassment are serious and repeated and an institution has taken no preventive measures, however, the likelihood of institutional liability increases. For example, institutions might be held responsible for peer harassment in their classrooms if faculty members knew or should have known that harassment was occurring and did nothing to stop it.

Title IX also requires that institutions have grievance procedures to handle discrimination complaints. Institutions ignoring peer harassment complaints might therefore be in violation of Title IX.

Institutions in violation of Title IX may face having charges filed by students with the Department of Education or in federal court, and may risk federal intervention and loss of federal funds.

■ *Criminal laws.* In some instances, harassed students may have a cause of action under state sexual assault and sexual abuse laws. State or local laws prohibiting activities such as disorderly conduct; trespassing; and lewd, obscene, or lascivious behavior also may be applicable to certain forms of peer harassment.

■ *State Anti-Discrimination Laws.* Several states have laws that prohibit discrimination in educational institutions and may cover peer harassment. Minnesota law, for example, requires that institutions must respond to sexual harassment complaints within twenty-four hours.

■ *Other laws.* Many legal issues involving student-to-student harassment are unsettled. Students may be able to claim emotional damage and sue the harassing individual(s) for monetary relief in instances of severe harassment. Some experts suggest that institutions as well as the harassing individuals also might be liable, especially when the acts interfere with the learning climate and affect a student's psychological well-being, and when the institution did not provide relief once it knew or should have known that an act of harassment had taken place. This, too, is an evolving area of law, and liability and remedies will vary depending on state law and the nature of the harassment. To the extent to which institutions are responsible for campus behavior—including actions by fraternities—institutions may be liable to suits for damages.

Although institutions cannot control completely the behavior of students, they may be able to limit any potential liability by developing, disseminating, and enforcing effective policies, and by providing educational programs to discourage harassment. Institutions should not condone or ignore actions or words that a reasonable person would view as harassing or demeaning. In general, students have a right to learn and live in an environment that supports their dignity and self-esteem.

The Role of Institutions

"Suppose, for example, a different scenario than the take back the night march here recently, where fraternity members . . . exhibited outrageous behavior. Suppose instead that a group of Black students, fed up with prejudicial treatment, had marched peacefully . . . past some dormitories . . . where white students . . . taunt[ed] marchers . . . with filthy language and racial epithets.

'Never would happen,' you say . . . Why not? Because all . . . students are free of racial prejudice? I doubt it. . . . It would not happen because neither the Black community here . . . nor the university community as a whole would stand for it. And even if, in fact, a few students did shout racial epithets . . . we would not all be treated to pious trash about how only a small minority of students had behaved that way, and about how in any case the Black student marchers were asking for it by implicitly provoking the white community." [33]

Some people believe that institutions should have little or no role in dealing with peer harassment, except perhaps in the case of the most extreme incidents. Abusive behavior on the part of young men may be viewed as "youthful hijinks." A woman's complaints may be dismissed as an "overreaction" or "oversensitivity." She may be told she ought to be able to handle the situation herself or not take it so seriously. Similarly, some department chairs and deans have ignored women who have complained about harassment from students, teaching assistants, or faculty members from foreign countries. Instead of addressing the issue, administrators have said, "Try to be understanding. He is from another culture."

Increasing numbers of campus administrators are trying to prevent and deal with peer harassment. At some institutions where rules and regulations governing student behavior were relaxed or abandoned during the 1960s, administrators and students are now considering a return to some form of *in loco parentis*. The phrase *in loco parentis*, which literally means "in the place of the parent," describes what some people believe to be the proper role of the institution: protecting their students, much as a parent would protect a child. Many persons on campus believe institutional intervention is necessary. As a former student activist has pointed out, there is a certain irony in this point of view because "the kinds of administrative controls over student life now demanded by these activists are similar to those that students of the 1960s fought against." [34]

Just as institutions should prevent and deal with instances of racial harassment, institutions should prevent and deal with instances of peer harassment based on sex. Institutions need to provide a climate in which men and women can grow and learn. It is well within the mandate of institutions to teach responsible behavior. These are public problems that need public solutions.

Recommendations [35]

"Students must get help from their universities in developing moral standards or they are unlikely to get much assistance at all. . . [Schools need to develop] fair rules of conduct that reinforce. . . basic values."
—Derek Bok, president, Harvard University [36]

Campus peer harassment is an issue of growing concern at many colleges as administrators increasingly recognize that a climate that tolerates harassment can inhibit academic learning, social growth, and psychological well-being. On some campuses, however, peer harassment is tolerated or ignored because the harm it can cause is often not recognized. The following recommendations are designed to help institutions deal with peer harassment and help them create an atmosphere in which such behaviors are no longer condoned or accepted. Unfortunately, there is no one solution to the problem of campus peer harassment. We have, therefore, developed a wide range of strategies. Many of the recommendations that follow can be adapted to individual campuses, although not all recommendations are appropriate for all campuses. The recommendations deal with prevention as well as what to do when harassment occurs. Additionally, the recommendations may be used as part of an institutional self-evaluation.

Because peer harassment incidents can range from moderate to severe, these recommendations have been developed to cover a wide range of incidents, including both sexual and nonsexual harassment. In deciding what actions to take, institutions may find it helpful to keep in mind that the severity of the incident matters more than whether or not it was strictly sexual in nature. In general, institutions need to respond to all serious incidents of peer harassment. [37]

Educating the Campus Community

Since the mandate of colleges and universities is to educate, the following recommendations are central to an institution's educational role in dealing with peer harassment on campus. As in dealing with racial bigotry, administrators find that education is more effective in preventing peer harassment than simply prohibiting the harassment. Additionally, sponsoring many activities throughout the school year helps maintain awareness of these issues. A single program, no matter how effective, is less likely to have a long-lasting impact.

- Ensure that there is a mechanism for coordinating a broad range of programs on sexism and other topics related to peer harassment. This could be a single office, or several offices, each responsible for specific areas. Provide adequate support for purchasing and developing materials for dissemination on campus.
- Train counselors, residential assistants, and other student personnel administrators to deal with peer harassment, including helping students handle it themselves when appropriate.
- Arrange to have peer counselors and resident advisors conduct discussions in dormitories about peer harassment issues.
- Require that student leaders attend peer harassment workshops or programs.
- Have staff or students organize a campuswide conference or speakout to sensitize the academic community to peer harassment.
- Inform faculty members about what constitutes peer harassment, especially in the classroom, and suggest ways to deal with it. For example, if men hiss when women discuss women's issues, faculty members will be alerted to react to and stop the behavior rather than ignore it.
- During orientation, stress such values as respect for others, tolerance, and freedom from harassment or intimidation for all members of the academic community. Such an emphasis can lay the foundation for improved relationships among students.
- Make sure that all new and transfer students receive a copy of school policies against peer harassment.
- Develop educational programs for all-male groups such as football and men's basketball teams and fraternities. These groups often perpetuate predatory attitudes toward women.
- Encourage men to form support groups to talk about interactions and relationships with women. For example, a discussion group at Haverford College (PA) was formed in 1986 to talk about how it feels to be male. Topics included date rape, girlfriends, and what it means to be assertive rather than aggressive. [38]
- Encourage fraternities and sororities to develop and present programs on peer harassment.
- Use campus radio, newspaper, and television to publicize availability of help for handling problems of peer harassment.
- Include references to peer harassment in any campus materials about sexual harassment. Several colleges and universities do this.
- Develop specific materials on peer harassment. The Hawaii Department of Education's poster against sexual harassment ("Sexual Harassment: It's Uncool") says, in part, "When you were a kid you and your friends may have teased the girls, made them cry, maybe even hurt some of them. 'Boys will be boys,' was the excuse. Let's call it what it is: sexual harassment. Domineering, tough, abusive behavior is not 'masculine.' It's unhealthy. It's uncool." [39]
- Hold an "Awareness Week" and schedule programs around the issue of peer harassment.
- Mention peer harassment in speeches to reinforce its importance as an institutional priority. In a convocation speech, the president of the University of New Hampshire addressed the issue of campus violence against women.
- Invite speakers to campus to discuss peer harassment issues. Publicize these events widely.
- Inform students about the legal definitions of and punishment for indecent exposure; lewd, obscene, and harassing behaviors; and sexual assault. Remind students that they may be civilly as well as criminally liable for psychological and physical injuries resulting from peer harassment.
- Promote activities in which students of both sexes and different racial and ethnic groups can participate together and learn about each other. For example, offer a series of workshops on topics such as assertiveness training, building self-esteem, development of values, sexual decision making, managing anger, resolving conflict, managing stress, enhancing relationships, human relations

training, alcohol education, training in social skills, sex role socialization, valuing diversity, and the appropriate use of personal power. Many schools have done this. These workshops help clarify many of the issues involved in peer harassment.

■ Offer self-defense classes for women. These programs also help women develop self-confidence in their ability to handle uncomfortable situations.

■ Sponsor educational forums about pornography. Most schools have difficulty banning pornographic movies and publications from campus. They have had more success in sponsoring educational forums that often lead to the movies being cancelled or publications withdrawn.

■ Hold a special orientation session each semester with international students and describe appropriate behavior toward women peers on campus. Provide written materials reiterating this message. Provide similar training and materials for teaching assistants and faculty members from other countries.

■ Encourage or require students to take ethnic studies and women's studies courses as a way to help them explore their own attitudes and values. Denison University (OH) requires all students to take a course in either women's or ethnic studies.

Developing Policies and Programs

■ Make sure that the code of student conduct expressly forbids sexual harassment of one student by another; date rape and other forms of sexual exploitation; intimidating or threatening behavior; and assault. For example, the student code at the University of Florida bars "actions or statements that amount to harassment or intimidation or hazing" and actions "including those of a sexual nature which are intimidating, harassing, or abusive." [40]

■ Include descriptions of specific forms of prohibited behavior in the student handbook or student code so that students understand what is being prohibited. Include an overall phrase (such as "lack of respect for others") that will cover incidents not explicitly described. List a wide range of possible penalties. Retaliation for filing a complaint should be clearly prohibited.

■ Ensure that policies prohibiting sexual harassment cover student-to-student harassment. Many of these policies apply only to harassment by faculty, administrators, and other staff.

■ Expand policies prohibiting racial harassment by students to include peer harassment based on sex. (Some schools have prohibited violence and harassment based on race but not based on sex.) The new University of Michigan code of behavior (1988) prohibits any threat or act that interferes with a student's education or "creates an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning environment" because of his or her race, sex, religion, or sexual preference. Specifically mention minority women as a group that may be harassed.

■ Peer harassment policies should not apply only to sex but to race, disability, and sexual preference as well.

■ Write policies that enable a school to pursue charges in a case of a serious alleged violation of the student conduct code even if the victim does not do so. [41] In some situations in which a school has taken action against an individual, several women who were reluctant to bring charges earlier came forward with additional complaints against the student.

■ Disseminate these policies widely and frequently (at least annually). Include them in student orientation programs and materials.

■ Ensure that the office of student life includes in its mandate the responsibility for handling and preventing peer harassment. (If there is no such office, establish one.)

■ When serious incidents of harassment occur, issue a public statement from the president condemning the behavior. Lack of official response is often misconstrued as approval or lack of concern. At Princeton University (NJ), after men and women involved in a "Take Back the Night" march were threatened, harassed, and mooned, campus officials issued a strong statement, making it clear that such behavior would not be tolerated. A second march was immediately scheduled and took place without incident.

■ Publicly identify harassment as a serious issue. At Bates College (ME), faculty members cancelled all classes and activities so students could attend a series of workshops and seminars on harassment. This followed an incident in which two male students attached an obscene picture with a note to the office door of a female faculty member. There had also been incidents in which male students had been harassing female students in their dormitories.

■ Appoint a task force that includes students to examine the problem of peer harassment on campus by:

- gathering information through surveys, hearings, or other methods; the Massachusetts Institute of Technology published such a report in 1983, *Barriers to Equality in Academia: Women in Computer Science at MIT*;
- evaluating current policies and procedures and, if necessary, drafting new ones to deal with peer harassment behaviors; and
- recommending educational and preventive programs.

■ Periodically review the extent of peer harassment via open hearings, interviews with student groups and individual students, and written student evaluations. This process helps ensure continued awareness of the issue and evaluation of the effectiveness of policies and procedures.

■ Establish a civility commission similar to the one established by the University of Massachusetts–Amherst. [42]

■ Establish a program of students working as counselor/advocates against sexual abuse. These students can provide confidential peer counseling, support services, advocacy, education, and information for victims of rape, battering, and sexual harassment. Hampshire College (MA) has a program that does this. The program is staffed by a full-time coordinator and ten student volunteers. (Often students are more comfortable talking to other students than to staff.)

■ Encourage dormitory residents to establish codes of behavior regarding interpersonal conduct.

■ Encourage interfraternity councils to develop codes of behavior concerning women. The Interfraternity Council at San Diego State University developed a statement condemning all forms of sexual abuse, including harassment.

■ Require individual fraternities and sororities to establish their own policies on peer harassment. These policies should be reviewed periodically by members and posted in the fraternity and sorority houses. Pledges should be asked to sign a statement that they have read the statement and will abide by it.

■ Require fraternities to prohibit any dangerous or harmful ac-

tivities. Develop procedures to monitor and enforce this policy. Many schools have such policies. At Cornell University, for example, the Pan-Hellenic Council, representing forty-two fraternities and thirteen sororities, has an anti-hazing policy that prohibits all physically harmful activities.

- Encourage student government organizations to publicize, sponsor, and conduct programs and to pass resolutions condemning peer harassment.
- Encourage campus minority, ethnic, and religious groups (such as Black student unions, campus ministries, and Hillel foundations) to publicize, sponsor, and conduct programs and to pass resolutions concerning harassment of women in general and of women from their particular group.
- Include peer harassment information in alcohol education programs and develop regulations for alcohol use on campus. Require that nonalcoholic beverages be available whenever alcohol is served at parties. Involve students in developing guidelines and planning how to increase student awareness.
- The student code of conduct should clearly state that use or abuse of alcohol will not be accepted as an excuse for abusive or damaging behaviors or for lessening sanctions against unacceptable acts.
- Develop a policy that discourages the use of pornography for profit or entertainment. Prohibit school support for such activities.
- Establish a procedure whereby buildings and equipment, such as tables and library carrels, are periodically inspected for sexist, racist, anti-Semitic, and other offensive graffiti. Develop ways to remove or cover such graffiti. Syracuse University (NY) has begun to remove graffiti from library desks.
- Report annually on peer harassment. Such a report could be incorporated into annual reports on sexual harassment in general, reports on racism, and reports on student life. The University of Minnesota issues an annual chart showing all reported incidents of sexual harassment (with names and other identifying information deleted). The chart, which is printed in the student newspaper, describes each incident, how it was handled, and what happened subsequently. The information not only helps people understand what behaviors violate institutional policy but also demonstrates how the institution is taking an active role in ending these behaviors.

Implementing Procedures

- Be sure that informal procedures are available so that complaints can be handled without formal charges when appropriate. Informal procedures can protect the privacy of persons involved and provide harassers with the opportunity to change their behavior. Furthermore, justice can sometimes best be served by having the accused agree to a penalty—such as community service—and apologize to the victim and therefore avoid a hearing.
- Explore the option of "third-party conciliation" as one way to handle complaints. This is especially useful in cases of ongoing harassment.[40]
- Be sure there is a way to deal with incidents that are disputed or unproved. As part of its new "Madison Plan," the University of Wisconsin-Madison is establishing a nondisciplinary mediation and counseling program under the auspices of the dean of students to provide immediate responses in cases of racial harassment. Such a program could be appropriate for some cases of peer harassment.
- Establish reasonable time frames for handling complaints.
- Publicize the name, office, and phone number of the appropriate person(s) who deals with peer harassment complaints. Be sure that the publicity reaches faculty members, administrators, staff, and students.
- Ensure that students who want to bypass informal resolution have the option of immediately taking formal steps, such as bringing charges before a discipline committee.
- Be sure that the person(s) designated to handle peer harassment complaints has received training in mediation techniques. The training will be helpful even if formal mediation is not involved in resolving a complaint.
- Provide rape crisis training for those who will be handling peer harassment complaints. This is useful training for handling serious incidents even if they are not actually sexual assault cases.
- Ensure confidentiality (when possible) so that those who have been harassed can freely discuss the incident.
- Respond when students anonymously report incidents of peer harassment that happened to them or to others. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, institutional response might range from talking to the alleged harasser to conducting a full-scale investigation.
- Ensure that the committee or other body that administers the student conduct code includes a substantial number of women.

Empowering Women

Many administrators who deal with peer harassment have found that most students do not want to file formal charges against their peers. They simply want the harassment to stop. In such instances, helping a woman handle the situation herself may be the most effective way to deal with peer harassment. Empowering a woman by providing her with options for responding to an uncomfortable situation makes her less of a victim. It also teaches her skills that will be valuable throughout her life.

One way to empower women is to ensure that those persons handling peer harassment complaints are familiar with the letter technique, which consists of having the harassed person send the harasser a special letter. The letter is polite, low-key, and detailed. It consists of three parts:

(1) a factual account of what happened, without any evaluation, as seen by the writer;

(2) a description of how the writer feels about what happened; and

(3) what the writer wants to happen next (for example, "I want you to stop harassing me and leave me alone.")

Writing the letter can give the writer a sense of doing something constructive about the situation. It can also give the harasser a new perception of how his behavior is experienced by others.[41]

■ Warn the accused to avoid any contact with the accuser during the period when the charges are being investigated (and in some instances, after a charge has been filed). Some men have tried to intimidate women into dropping charges.
■ Specifically inform a student who has been accused of harassment that any retaliation by him or his friends against the person who reported the incident will be a serious offense.
■ Inform both the accuser and the accused about what will happen next, including the disciplinary committee's procedures. It is helpful to have specially prepared materials that students can take with them and read later. A question/answer format is useful.
■ Consider informing the parents of young students who have been subjected to serious harassment (as well as those accused of harassing) about what has happened, is happening, and is going to happen.
■ Inform participants (victims and harassers) both by letter and in person about the actual charges in any disciplinary hearing.
■ Develop procedures for handling peer harassment complaints for times when school is not in session—for example, before a semester begins or after classes end.
■ Develop written guidelines for dealing with peer harassment for persons likely to handle such incidents, such as resident advisors and fraternity and sorority faculty sponsors.
■ Especially when serious incidents occur and both the harassers and the persons harassed reside in the same living unit, consider moving the harassers to another unit. Should the victims prefer to move, provide alternative housing. In several incidents, including gang rapes that occurred in dormitories, the victims were not allowed to change housing.
■ Arrange for men involved in peer harassment cases to receive counseling, if appropriate. This should not be viewed as a substitute for disciplinary action.
■ Ensure that the judicial procedures follow due process.
■ When formal charges are filed, conduct an investigation of what happened. Clarify who is in charge of the campus investigation and set appropriate lines of communication. This will eliminate confusion and duplication. It will also help students know who is in authority and to whom they should be talking.
■ Be sure that policies allow those who have been harassed as well as those charged to be accompanied by support persons at any hearings that may be held.
■ Develop a clear and consistent policy on appropriate sanctions for those individuals who commit serious peer harassment offenses. Sanctions, varying with the seriousness of the incident, might include one or more of the following:
  - counseling, including group counseling, to help harassers better understand the nature of their acts and the implications and consequences for themselves and for the victims;
  - requiring the perpetrators to attend workshops on peer harassment;
  - in cases involving excessive drinking, requiring those involved to attend programs on alcohol abuse;
  - requiring those involved to inform their parents;
  - requiring relevant community service such as helping alleviate the problem of campus peer harassment by preparing posters or disseminating information about harassment;
  - requiring the perpetrators to write a letter of apology to the victim;
  - probation for a specified time;
  - suspension for a specified time;
  - expulsion. The University of Michigan Board of Regents has approved new rules for student conduct that include expulsion from the university as a possible penalty for those guilty of committing discriminatory acts (including actions based on a person's sex).[45]

Institutional Self-evaluation Checklist

■ Are there specific policies and effective procedures dealing with peer harassment?
■ Does the code of student conduct expressly forbid peer harassment behaviors?
■ Are policies and procedures well publicized and widely circulated periodically among faculty, staff, and students?
■ Are there specific persons on campus to whom women can go for help with peer harassment issues? How do students learn whom they should see?
■ Are there effective channels for complaints about peer harassment?
■ Does the sexual harassment policy cover sexual harassment by peers?
■ Are remedies clear and commensurate with the level of violation?
■ Is there a procedure to inform new students, staff, and faculty about peer harassment?
■ Is there a task force or other structure that has examined peer harassment on your campus?
■ Are there regular campus workshops or programs on peer harassment issues? alcohol education?
■ What services are available to victims of peer harassment?

Special Help for Students Who Are Harassed

■ Be sure there are many resources for women who have been harassed. Resources may include the counseling center, women's center, student affairs office, and resident assistants. Providing alternatives encourages women to come forward to talk about their experiences.
■ Be sure that information and counseling, as well as medical care and protection, if needed, are available to women who have been harassed.
■ Ensure that a woman who cites an incident of peer harassment knows that the institution's support services, such as counseling, are available whether or not she files a formal charge or cooperates in a campus investigation. For the more serious forms of harassment, provide the student with specific information about the support the institution will provide.
■ In cases of severe harassment, support systems should be extended in order to help the person harassed handle any academic problems that may arise after the harassment. Such support could take the form of offering to provide the student with a letter to

A Word to Students: Some Dos and Don'ts

These recommendations are for men and women alike.

- Do protest organized activities demeaning to women—for example, wet T-shirt contests or pornographic movies used as fundraisers.
- Do organize against sexual assault on campus. Numerous women's groups have sponsored "Take Back the Night" marches against sexual assault on campus. Men often march with women to show their support.
- Do try to plan positive activities in response to negative behavior. When pornographic movies are shown, some campus groups provide educational programs about pornography.
- Do support activities of women's groups on your campus.
- Do support those who are protesting peer harassment on campus. If you do not officially join them, at least offer them your emotional support. Do not ridicule them.
- Do encourage your school newspaper to do stories on peer harassment on your campus.
- Do report peer harassment incidents to the proper authorities on campus.
- Do avoid degrading or dangerous sorority or fraternity initiation rites. Generally, women should be wary of any sorority initiation rite that involves going to a fraternity house.
- Don't participate in wet T-shirt contests, "nude olympics," "body passing," or other demeaning activities.
- Don't tell jokes that demean women.
- Don't condone harassment by men or collusion by women. Speak up and protest to individuals who harass and, if you feel safe doing so, to groups of men harassing women. (Say, for example, "This behavior is offensive to women, and I don't like it" or "I wish you wouldn't") You can also leave an event. In other words, do whatever you can to create an attitude of nonacceptance of this behavior and of peer harassment in general.
- Don't drink to excess. People who drink may get into verbal or physical sparring matches.
- Don't do anything that makes you uncomfortable.

faculty members explaining her situation or a support person who will accompany her while she talks with faculty members.

- Inform peer harassment victims of the possibility of countercharges being filed by the person she is filing against. At one school, a woman was involved in an altercation at an off-campus bar. She and another student had been drinking heavily, started arguing, and ended up shoving each other before they were stopped by onlookers. The woman complained about the incident at school and subsequently found out that the young man involved had filed a complaint against her. At another school, a man accused of rape filed a charge of defamation of character against his accuser.

Notes

1. Report of a trustee commission on campus life at a four-year college. Generally we have not identified the institutions that are sources of quotations or examples used in this report. Our experience indicates that peer harassment is not an unusual occurrence and we do not want to imply—by naming institutions—that incidents occur only at these institutions or that the climate at these institutions is worse than at others. Quotations, unless otherwise identified, are from students.
2. Mary S. Hartman, dean of Douglass College, Rutgers—The State University—New Brunswick (Testimony before University Select Committee on Fraternities 19 April 19 1988), p. 8.
3. While some people would place relationship violence and acquaintance rape at the end of a peer harassment continuum, others believe that rape is in a category by itself. For further information about rape, see the Project on the Status and Education of Women's (PSEW) Campus Rape Packet and *"Friends" Raping Friends: Could It Happen to You?* listed below in "Selected Resources." For further information about relationship violence (physical and psychological abuse including degradation and intimidation), see, for example, editorial, "Premarital Violence: Battering on College Campuses," *Response to Violence in the Family*, vol. 4, no. 6 (July/August 1981), p. 1.
4. Men also harass other men—for example, gay men. Many of the recommendations in this report are also applicable to these situations.
5. In fact, one writer, Pat Mahony, finds coeducation "a disaster" for women; "Co-education does not prepare girls. It batters them." See *Schools for the Boys? Co-education Reassessed* (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1985), p. 90; as cited in a book review by Carolyn C. Lougee, *Signs*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1987), p. 170.
6. Warren A. Brown and Jane Maestro-Scherer, *Assessing Sexual Harassment and Public Safety: A Survey of Cornell Women* (New York: Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research, July 1, 1986), p. 23.
7. Elizabeth Jane Salkind, " 'Can't You Take a Joke?' A Study of Sexual Harassment Among Peers" (Master's thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, February 1986), p. 63.
8. *Assessment of Sexual Harassment Within the URI Community: A Report of an Investigation by the Assessment Task Group of the Sexual Harassment Committee*, (Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island, August 1980), p. 26.
9. At a number of institutions, peer harassment has been cited as one of several reasons for disbanding the fraternity system.
10. Edward B. Fiske, "A New President in a Week of Rallies and Parties," *New York Times*, 30 April 1987, p. B-3.
11. See, for example, Salkind, "Can't You Take a Joke?," p. 72, Table 4.C.2.
12. Women in groups also may do things that they would not do if alone. However, gang behavior among females is generally not as prevalent nor as destructive as that of males in groups. Additionally, gang behavior by males such as hazing is often widely accepted in societal institutions ranging from fraternities to the military.
13. Lougee, book review, p. 170.
14. Sue Anne Pressley, "Three Men Storm Maryland Sorority House," *The Washington Post*, 13 September 1986, p. D-1.
15. For example, at one institution male students residing in a coeducational dormitory "captured" a female resident, tied her to a bed spread-eagle, and tormented and humiliated her. She was molested but not raped.
16. Unpublished data, PSEW files. For further information, see *Campus Gang Rape: Party Games?*, listed below in "Selected Resources."
17. Equally important, large numbers of women students report incidents of sexual aggression. Barry R. Burkhart presented the results of two studies at the "Acquaintance Rape and Rape Prevention on Campus Workshop" held in Louisville, KY, December 12-14, 1983. In one study, 75 percent of first-year women students reported they had experienced some form of sexual aggression. In the other study of two

hundred college sophomore and junior women, 15 percent had been forced to have sex against their will; 35 percent had clothing unfastened against their will; 35 percent had their genital area touched against their will; and only 43 percent had not been forced to do anything against their will.

18. The same picture is not categorized as sexual harassment if it is on display in the privacy of a male student's room.

19. Studies show that men interrupt women significantly more often than they interrupt other males. See, for example, *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?*, listed below in "Selected Resources."

20. Consciously or not, male faculty members, including teaching assistants, are models for male students. When they treat women with respect, they are teaching appropriate behavior to their students. However, some male faculty members do not treat women well, for example, by using sexist humor to "spice up a dull subject," or by making disparaging comments about women. They are thus demonstrating behavior that will encourage male students to disparage and possibly harass women. Some faculty members support male students who harass women in class by ignoring or refusing to discourage harassing behavior. At other times, faculty members may laugh along with male students at the expense of women. By treating women with respect and discouraging harassment of any sort, male faculty members may not only influence what happens in a classroom, but may provide examples of good behavior that can be used outside the classroom as well.

21. Julie K. Ehrhart and Bernice R. Sandler, *Campus Gang Rape: Party Games?* (Washington, DC: Project on the Status and Education of Women of the Association of American Colleges, 1985), p. 7.

22. For further discussion, including the relationship of JAP jokes to anti-Semitism, see Sherry Chayat, "'Jap'-Baiting on the College Scene," Judith Allen Rubenstein, "The Graffiti Wars," and Susan Schnur, "Blazes of Truth," *Lilith*, No. 17 (Fall 1987).

23. Laura Shapiro, "When Is a Joke Not a Joke?," *Newsweek*, 23 May 1988, p. 79.

24. Rubenstein, "The Graffiti Wars," p. 8.

25. Nadine Brozan, " 'Princess' Label Linked to Bigotry," *New York Times*, 2 May 1988.

26. Of these, the number of men (70,300) is nearly three times the number of women (25,000). These statistics are reported in *CGS/GRE Annual Survey of Graduate Enrollment: 1986 Report*, compiled by the Council of Graduate Schools and the Educational Testing Service. (Princeton, NJ: December 1987), pp. 6-7.

27. Some men may be well aware of the inappropriateness of their behavior but pretend that they do not know the rules of acceptable behavior.

28. For additional examples, see *Barriers to Equality in Academia: Women in Computer Science at MIT*, prepared by female graduate students and research staff in the Laboratory for Computer Science and the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, February 1983. For a discussion of devaluation, see *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women*, listed below in "Selected Resources."

29. Generally, institutions are concerned with, and in many instances liable for, incidents occurring *on campus* and at university-sponsored *off-campus* events. Institutional liability for other off-campus acts of students is generally more limited.

30. 106 Supreme Court 2399 (1986).

31. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Discrimination Because of Sex Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as Amended; Adoption of Interpretive Guidelines," *Federal Register*, vol. 455, no. 72, April 11, 1980.

32. As a result of the Supreme Court decision in *Grove City College v. Bell* (1984), Title IX coverage was restricted only to the specific program or activity receiving federal funds. With the passage of the Civil Rights Restoration Act in March 1988, Title IX's original coverage was restored; that is, the institution, if it receives any federal funds, is prohibited from discriminating in all of its programs or activities. (Exemptions are primarily in the area of abortions, undergraduate admissions to private institutions, and fraternity and sorority single-sex membership requirements.)

33. Hartman testimony, p. 6.

34. L. A. Kauffman, "How Political Is the Personal?" *The Nation*, 26 March 1988, p. 420.

35. Some of these recommendations appear in earlier PSEW publications, especially *Campus Gang Rape: Party Games?* and *Out of the Classroom: A Chilly Campus Climate for Women?* Although the recommendations have been developed to deal with harassment of women students by male peers, many of the recommendations are also appropriate for harassment of men or for woman-to-woman harassment.

36. "Bok says Students Need Colleges' Help on Ethics," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 34, no. 32, 20 April 1988, p. A-2.

37. If the person harassed does not want the institution to intervene, it may be best in some instances for the institution not to pursue the matter. However, in these instances, and especially if the incident has been well publicized, the institution might want to respond generally, for example by developing educational programs and policies relating to that type of incident.

38. "University Withdraws Sponsorship of Fraternity After Incident," *On Campus With Women*, vol. 16, no. 2, (Fall 1986), p. 11.

39. According to a letter (Jan. 25, 1988) from Project ESTEEM staff member Jackie Young, the poster was inspired by the materials put out by sex equity specialists Nan Stein, Gene Lidell, Sheila Hawkins, and the University of Michigan's Center for Sex Equity in Schools' *Title IX Line* newsletter, vol. 4, no. 1 (Fall 1983).

40. Cheryl M. Fields, "Colleges Weigh Liability in Alcohol and Sexual-Harassment Cases," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Vol. 34, No. 21, 3 February 1988, p. A-14.

41. See note 37.

42. The Chancellor's Commission on Civility in Human Relations at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst was established in 1980 to "identify incidents of racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism, to assess the moral climate on campus, to formulate public statements opposing antisocial expression, and to recommend action that would improve attitudes and foster decency on campus." (Page 11 of Vincent G. Dethier, *A University in Search of Civility* [Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts–Amherst, Institute for Governmental Services, 1984].) The commission was composed of students, faculty, and staff. In 1981, the commission spearheaded a "year toward civility," during which there were a variety of activities including workshops, lectures, and films, to sensitize those on campus to issues of sexism, racism, and anti-Semitism. On the commission's recommendation, an office of human relations was established. The civility commission currently has twenty-five members, meets frequently, and operates as part of the office of human relations.

43. For a comprehensive discussion of this technique, see *Writing a Letter to the Sexual Harasser*, included as part of PSEW's Sexual Harassment Packet listed below in "Selected Resources."

44. Some experts believe that mediation should not be used after the fact. "A student has been hurt or humiliated: she seeks redress of a wrong. Referring her to mediation suggests that she is part of the problem that needs to be resolved and forces her to negotiate with her tormentor." Correspondence from attorney Suzanne Fong to authors, 24 May 1988.

45. "Michigan Sets Penalties for Discriminatory Acts," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, vol. 34, no. 29, 30 March 1988, p. 3.

Selected Resources

The following publications may be useful in dealing with peer harassment and are available from the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009. ALL ORDERS MUST BE PREPAID. Bulk rates are available. For a list of all PSEW publications, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request.

- *In Case of Sexual Harassment: A Guide for Women Students* ($2)
- *"Friends" Raping Friends: Could It Happen to You?* ($2)
- Sexual Harassment Packet ($5). Includes:
  - *Sexual Harassment: A Hidden Issue*
  - Selected Articles from ON CAMPUS WITH WOMEN
  - *Title VII Sexual Harassment Guidelines and Educational Employment*
  - *What Can Students Do About Sex Discrimination?*
  - *Writing a Letter to the Sexual Harasser: Another Way of Dealing With the Problem*
  - *Harvard Issues Statement About Sexual Harassment and Related Issues*
- Campus Rape Packet ($5). Includes:
  - *Campus Gang Rape: Party Games?*
  - *The Problem of Rape on Campus*
- Student Climate Issues Packet ($7). Includes:
  - *The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?*
  - *Selected Activities Using "The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?"*
  - *Out of the Classroom: A Chilly Campus Climate for Women?*
- *Looking for More Than a Few Good Women in Traditionally Male Fields* ($5)

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